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Life

Feeding the soul
Health, harvest go hand-in-hand
● C3



Home, health and harvest come together in this kitchen

Cooking up a cure

by **Mary Ellen Smith**

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The Daily Journal/Michelle Gannon
Guia Hoffman, of Kempton, shows off her tiramisu.

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Guia Hoffman met her husband Mark while he was serving with the Peace Corps in her homeland, the Philippines. A shared interest landed them both a job in Imelda Marcos' health program.

After the two married, Guia learned to combine her love of health and of cooking (a skill she learned from her mother and older siblings) in order to help the couple's own children recognize a firmly held belief that food is medicine and medicine is food.

It's a philosophy that she shares today with guests at the Hoffmans' Greenhouse Bed and Breakfast, where a typical meal might include bagels with fruit sauces canned from their own fruit trees, eggs laid by their own hens, homemade beef sausages, frittatas filled with their own organically grown vegetables, and steaming cups of home-roasted organic coffee.

Name: Guia Hoffman

Age: 56

Hometown: Butuan City, Philippines

Occupation and place of employment: We own and operate The Greenhouse Bed and Breakfast in Kempton.

On a daily basis, who do you cook for? What are the types of meals you cook? I cook for my husband on a daily basis. If time allows, I prepare him a five-course meal. If not, I make quick, one-dish meals like salads and soups with fruit desserts.

What is your favorite meal to prepare? Why? I enjoy preparing a Mediterranean meal because it is a very healthy meal. It is like having a smorgasbord of French, Italian, Greek and Spanish foods.

Who has been the greatest influence on your cooking skills? How did this person inspire you in the kitchen? My children and my husband are the greatest influences on my cooking skills. They not only love to eat but are also very adventurous when it comes to food. On the technical

side, my instructor from Joliet Junior College, Siegfried Mieland, who is German, influenced me greatly because he taught his students not only to cook from scratch but also made us identify and apply the proper nutrients in each recipe. He also taught precision and cleanliness with speed and accuracy in cooking.

If you could invite one person to your home for dinner, who would it be and why? What would you cook? It sounds ambitious, but I would be ecstatic to invite President Barack Obama. I would prepare international dishes for him, which reflect how he portrays himself.

Do you have a specialty? How did it come to be? I enjoy preparing hors d'oeuvres. They allow me to display my art in culinary form.

What's the one kitchen tool you can't live without? Why is it so important to you? Without my chef's knife, cooking would be a mess for me. It is important to me because it is the one tool in the kitchen that is versatile.

What have you never made but would like to master one day? Why, and what's kept you from trying it? I have never made a real croissant. Real croissants require a three-day process to achieve that buttery crunch that melts in your mouth.

When you eat out, where do you like to go? What's so special about this place? My husband and I don't eat out often, but when we do we go to fine-dining restaurants. I have especially fond memories of America's Bistro in Kankakee. This is where three of us couples ate several years ago. It was memorable because we all got the giggles. We laughed and laughed until our tummies ached and we had tears in our eyes. We thought we would be kicked out of the restaurant but instead we found out that our laughter was contagious.

What is your idea of "the perfect meal"? Who would be there and what would you cook? What would the atmosphere be like? My idea of a perfect meal is cooking for my husband and four children. It doesn't matter whether it is holiday or not; the important thing is their presence. That creates a perfect atmosphere.

Taste of the Town

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Tiramisu

- 10.6 ounces French vanilla fruche* or heavy whipped cream with 1 tablespoon lime juice, preferably fresh**
- 7.1 ounces fresh ricotta or mascarpone cheese**
- 1 egg**
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar**
- 1 cup boiling water**
- 3 teaspoons instant coffee granules**
- 1/3 cup Marsala wine**
- 1 package ladyfinger cookies**
- 2 teaspoons cocoa powder, for dusting**

* fruche is a light French cheese with a slightly tart taste that has the consistency of a thick yogurt.
Place the first four ingredients in a medium mixing bowl.

Whisk with an electric mixer for one minute. Combine the boiling water, coffee granules and Marsala in a 3-cup measuring cup. Pour half into a bowl. Dip half the cookies one at a time into the coffee mixture, and then place them in a single layer to cover the base of an 8-cup dish. Brush with any coffee mixture that remains from this half.

Spread half of the fruche mixture evenly over the sponge fingers. Dip the second half of ladyfingers into the remaining coffee mixture and place them over the fruche layer. Brush with any remaining coffee mixture. Top with the remaining fruche mixture. Smooth the surface with a spatula and evenly dust with the cocoa powder.

Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight for the flavors to develop. It tastes even better after two days.